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The Italian Hold-up of Turkey.

The ultimatum sent by Italy to Turkey, on September 28, in regard to Tripoli, astonished and disgusted the world. The reasons assigned by the Italian government for the unexpected and violent hold-up of Turkey across the Mediterranean have not commended themselves to the world-public, not even to that portion of it which is usually not over-scrupulous about the intervention of strong powers in the affairs of weaker ones. Italy's lawlessness—for that is the true name of it—has been condemned by nearly all the respectable journals of the civilized countries—in England, France, Germany, the United States, etc. From every point of view the action has been judged to be indefensible. There had been, so far as the facts are known, no such exaggerated opposition to Italian citizens and Italian interests in Tripoli as the ultimatum laid emphasis upon. Nor does the Italian government appear to have made any effort whatever to secure an adjust-

ment of the difficulties through the Hague institutions, which she had had an honorable share in creating. It seems, therefore, that her act in going to war after only 24 hours' notice and at once invading the country was nothing less than brigandage, pure and simple. The case against her has not been more clearly and strongly put than by an Italian paper, *Il Secolo*, one of the most prominent dailies in the peninsula. Speaking of the ultimatum it says, as given in the *Arbitrator*:

"With a like plea tomorrow some more civilized, stronger, wealthier and war-prepared power could say to us, 'You have left half Italy in disorder and abandonment. Your southern regions welter in misery, illiteracy, political corruption and superstition; roads, aqueducts and every other means for exploiting their enormous latent wealth are lacking; we are going to take possession in order to introduce civilization there.' What should we reply?

"We should answer that, civilized or uncivilized, good or bad administrators, poor or inept, we intended before all else to be masters in our own house. Every country has the right to attend to its own regeneration. No one maintains that Turkey today has fallen into such a state of barbarism and dismemberment as to authorize other European powers, under the pretext of civilization, to wrench away this or that province on the plea of introducing good government.

"We refrain from sadder and more bitter reflections on this topic which we are tempted to pen. Italy's ultimatum protests that our commercial enterprises have always met with systematic opposition in Tripoli, but the stupefied world will demand of us today what have been or are these grandiose commercial undertakings of ours. In the whole of Tripoli we have 600 or 700 Italians, and the only undertaking we know of is that of the Bank of Rome. What activities of our fellow-countrymen there have been so far seriously thwarted by Turkish authorities? The ultimatum does not cite a single case.

"Our eagerness to secure contracts for mines, agricultural schemes and construction of roads and ports was justly calculated to arouse Turkish suspicions, when for years past it has been shouted on the housetops throughout Italy that our real and final object was to take possession of Tripoli itself."

That last line exposes the real ground for the ultimatum and the invasion. Nearly all the rest was pretext and deception, if one may judge by what has followed. Italy wanted Tripoli, and she decided to take advantage of Turkey's distraction and weakness and seize it. It was high-handed robbery, of which none of us in advance would have believed modern Italy capable.